

Testimony for the Appropriations Committee

February 24, 2022

My name is Fran Traceski and I am from Canton, CT. I am testifying on the Governor's proposed budget H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNium ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 that unfortunately does not include critical funding for our safety net providers and their employees.

After decades of underfunding, Connecticut's direct support providers are in crisis mode because the effects of the pandemic have impacted their ability to attract and retain direct care workers and other employees. This staff is critically important to the safety and well-being of many of Connecticut's residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), including my own family.

At this moment in time, many if not most agencies supporting people with IDD find themselves as much as 25% understaffed. This has led to cutbacks in critical core programs, a drying up of recreational & community based activities and an inability for newly graduated high school students to find placement in local agencies. The cost to our loved ones in personal development and future potential is immeasurable.

Without your help, our state's community service delivery system will continue to shrink and our loved ones will bear the brunt of this loss. We are already experiencing the worst staffing crisis that service providers have ever seen, which has resulted in an inability to resume programs paused during COVID and caused a rebound effect for family caregivers who are unable to return to work and contribute to Connecticut's economy.

Now more than ever, we need to ensure that critically necessary funding of \$150 million is included in this year's budget for the state's non-profit providers who care for our loved ones on a daily basis. We urge your support and ask that you add this funding to the budget before this committee. Every Child Matters.

Sincerely,

Francis J. Traceski

5 Deer Run Rd
Canton, CT 06019